

## A REVIEW ON THE ROLE OF VIRECHANA IN VARIOUS SKIN DISEASES

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<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj3009112021>

(Published Online: November 2021)

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Article Received: 25/10/2021 - Peer Reviewed: 05/11/2021 - Accepted for Publication: 06/11/2021

**ABSTRACT**

*Virechan* is one of the *Shodhan Chikitsa* described in *ayurvedic* texts. It is mainly advised in the *pitta* and *rakta Pradhan* diseases. All skin diseases in *ayurveda* have been considered under *kustha*. At present time antibiotics and antifungal medicines are being resistant, so it is becoming difficult day by day to cure such skin diseases, but in *Ayurveda*, *Virechan karma* is a very powerful therapy to combat these diseases. Skin is the index of our body. Healthy skin represents a healthy body. Improper usage of foods and drinks along with unhealthy activities manifest diseases. *Virechan karma* is the second therapy in the sequence of *panchakarmas*, the most widely used purificatory procedure especially for *paitika* and *raktas* diseases. It is also useful in the disorders in which *pitta* is associated with *vata* or *kapha*. *Ayurveda* states that sluggish liver (dysfunction of the liver) associated with *doshic* imbalance causes skin diseases. There are so many skin diseases that are not curable by other procedures. According to *Ayurveda* *Virechan karma* is very much beneficial in curing the different obstinate skin diseases as psoriasis, eczema, acne vulgaris, vitiligo, leukoderma etc. *Ayurveda* always looks to the root cause so the patient can restore their body to a healthy state and eliminate the symptoms of skin diseases. This article deals with various skin diseases and their treatment by using *Virechan* therapy.

**Keywords:** *Virechan*, *Shodhanchikitsa*, Skin Diseases, *Psoriasis*, *Panchkarma*,

## INTRODUCTION

The removal of *Dosha* through the '*Adhobhaga*' is symbolized as *Virechana*. It is one of the *Shodhana Karma* as mentioned in the *Ayurvedic* texts. Regarding this definition, commentator *Chakrapani* has clarified '*Adhobhaga*' means '*Guda*' (Anal passage). By this route, the *Dosha* can be eliminated by *Niruha Basti* also, but *Niruha Basti* has no power of '*Adhobhaga harana*' and so *Niruha Basti* cannot be included under *Virechana karma*<sup>1</sup>. *Virechana* is a supreme procedure out of all *Panchkarma*, especially for the elimination of *Pittadosha*<sup>2</sup>. *Virechan* is a very effective therapy for skin diseases. As before said that in the treatment of *pitta dosha* *Virechan* is beneficial because the skin is the place where *Bhrajak pitta* is situated, and good skin is the result of balanced *Bhrajak pitta*. *Acharya Sushruta* was the first person to describe *Bhrajak Pitta* as a variety of *Pitta*. He has also used the term *Bhrajaka* for *Bhrajja Pitta*. According to *Acharya Chakrapani* commenting on the above states that the regulation of body heat & complexion variation is the function of *Bhrajaka Pitta*<sup>3</sup>. *Shodhana* therapy is the most important measure for *Bahudosha Vyadhi*. If *Doshas* are depleted with *Shamana* therapy, there are chances to provoke that *Doshas* again, but if they are removed by *Shodhana* therapy, there are no chances to provoke again<sup>4</sup>. Skin diseases are almost described under the topic *Kushta* and *Kushta* is *tridosajvyadhi*, it is the reason that *shodhan karma* is best in skin diseases. *Virechana* cleanses sense organs i.e., improves their function, purifies body tissues, increases digestive power of *Agni* i.e., *Jatharagni*, *Dhatvagni* etc., proper applied *Virechana karma* acts a key role in the delaying age factors. In *Malbhoota Ashayas* (weakened organ) *Dosha Dushya Samucchaya* persists. This *Samucchaya* is eradicated only through means of *Virechana* (*Shodhana*). *Shamana Chikitsa* fails in this matter. As a result, it cannot treat any disease radically<sup>5</sup>.

### Skin-

In modern the skin is classified into two main parts: first is superficial, thinner portion, which is composed of epithelial tissue, is Epidermis and second is deeper, thicker connective tissue portion is Dermis.

The Epidermis is avascular, and the Dermis is vascular, that's why, by cutting the layer of the epidermis is not bleed, but if we cut the dermis it bleeds. Deep to the dermis, but not part of the skin, is the subcutaneous layer, known as the Hypodermis. This layer consists of areolar and adipose tissues<sup>6</sup>. The Epidermis is further grouped into five layers<sup>7</sup>:

1. Stratum Corneum or Horny Layer
2. Stratum Lucidum
3. Stratum Granulosum
4. Stratum Spinosum or Malphigian Layer
5. Stratum Basale or Germinative Layer the Dermis is further divided into two regions<sup>8</sup>:

I. Papillary region

II. Reticular region

According to *Ayurveda Acharya Sushruta* the concept of *Twacha* in *Shareera Sthana* (*Sushruta-shareera Shrestha*) as *Twacha* has seven layers, *Avabhasini* is the first layer of skin that provides colour to the skin. It is *Adhishthana* of *Sidhma* (small ulcers) and *Padmakantaka* (*Pemphigus mollaceus*), The second layer is *lohita* It is *Adhishthana* of *Tilakalaka* (moles), *nyachchha* (pimples) and *vyanga* (*acne vulgaris*). *Shveta* is the third layer in which *Charamdala*, *Ajagalli* and *Mashaka* (*taenia* infection of skin and candidiasis) skin diseases are occurring. The fourth layer of *Twacha* is *Tamra*, it is the place of different *Kilasa* (*lepromatous*) and *Kustha* (*tuberculoïd leprosy*). *Vedini* is the fifth layer of skin, *Kushtha* (*leprosy*) and *Visarpa* (*erysipelas*) occur in this layer. *Rohini* is the sixth layer of *Twacha*, it is *Adhishthana* of *Granthi* (*varicose veins*), *Apachi* (*benign tumours*), *Arbuda* (*tumours*), *Shlipada* (*filariasis*) and *Galaganda* (*goitre*) disease. The seventh or last layer of skin is *Mamsadhara*, it is the site of *Bhagandara* (*fistula-in-ano*), *Vidradhi* (*abscess*) and *Arsha* (*piles*) disease<sup>9</sup>.

### Classification of Virechana<sup>10</sup>:

*Virechana* has no classification however *Acharya Sharangadhara* has classified it as follows –

**Anulomana:** The drug which forwards the Mala after their digestion and breaking their *Bandha* are known as *Anulomana* e.g., *Haritaki*. Here, *bandha* means

*bandha* of *Vayu*. Acharya Sushruta has given synonyms of *Anulomana* as *Sara*, and acharya Dalhana adds that *Anulomana* causes expulsion of *Vata* and *Kapha*. Acharya Bhavamishra has considered undigested *doshas* as *Mala rupa* and said that drugs that expel them are *anulomana*. From a practical viewpoint, the meaning 'removal of *bandana* of *Vayu*' fits more appropriately to *Anulomana karma*.

**Sramana:** The drug which expels half-digested and sticky *Mala* without its prior digestion is known as *Sramana*, e.g., *Aragavadha*. *Bhavaprakasha* opines that 'Adi' of word *Maladi* denotes *Kapha* and *Pitta*, hence the field of *Sramsana* widens. The difference between *Anulomana* and *Sramsana* is the absence of digestion of *Mala* in *Sramsana* indicating it's a bit stronger property.

**Bhedana:** The drug which disintegrates the *Abaddha* (unformed) or *Baddha* (well-formed) or *Pindita* (dried faecal mass) *Pindita mala* and directs it outside the body through the lower gut is known as *Bhedana*. E.g., *Katuki*. Here, the drug potency is more, and it can expel even the hard, *Pindita* stool.

**Rechana:** The drug, which eliminates digested as well as undigested *Mala* or *Dosha* by making them watery through the anal route are known as *Rechana* e.g. *Trivrit*. Here *Adhamalla's* adds that this class of drugs not only eliminates the digested or indigested *Mala* in watery form, but it also does this very quickly (*reheats*). The word *Rechana* sounds like *Virechana*, but the latter lacks the *Purva karma* and *Pashchat karma*, having only localized effects.

**Indication of Virechana-** *Kushtha* (Skin diseases), *Visphotaka* (Eruptions), *Pandu*, Indigestion<sup>11</sup>, *visarpa*, *vatarakta*<sup>12</sup>, Hyper pigmentation, Leukoderma, Psoriasis, Dermatitis, Herpes zoster<sup>13</sup>,

#### **Role of virechana karma in skin diseases**

*Virechana* is very much beneficial in curing different obstinate skin diseases. A comparative single-blind critical trial in 20 patients suffering from *ekakushtha* (psoriasis) has shown that *virechana karma* is very effective in the remission of the illness. Patients were initially subjected *pachana chikitsa* with oral administration of *jeerakadi churna* in a dose of 5 grams tid. This was followed by *abhyantra snehpana* with *gug-*

*gulu tiktaka ghrita* till the attainment of symptoms of proper *snehana*. Following *abhyanga* and *svedana* the patients were treated with *virechana karma* by oral administration of *trivritlehya* in a dose of 30 to 40 grams. After the *virechana* and *samsarjana karma*, the patients were treated with *shaman chikitsa* with *arogyavardhini rasa* in a dose of 500 mg tid along with *aragvadhadi kashaya*. The study revealed the best improvement and complete remission of the illness in the majority of the patients as assessed by the psoriasis severity index score. The results were also statistically highly significant<sup>14</sup>. A research article said about psoriasis that *Virechana karma* is commonly supported in the management of psoriasis as it helps in correcting the basic pathogenic factors with *pitta*, *rakta*, *Agni*, *twak*. 50 % relief in symptoms after the *shodhana* therapy. Thus, *Virechana karma* (purgation therapy) followed by internal medications is considered the best line of management for skin disorders<sup>15</sup>. Eczema is characterized by itching, dryness of skin, swelling, reddening, dryness, and flaking. Scratching of skin results in rashes. In Ayurveda, this disease is known as *Vicharchika*. Eczema is triggered when the immunity of the body is affected - the trigger may be caused due to various reasons like irritants (soap, shampoos, detergents, disinfectants), allergens (pets, pollen, dust mites), bacteria, hot and humid temperature, perspiration, food items (stale, spicy, fermented, fried food items), stress, excessive intake of items like tea, coffee, alcohol and many others<sup>16</sup>. *Virechan* therapy by its detoxification process shows a good impact on eczema<sup>17</sup>. A research revealed that oral administration of *Guduchi-Bhringaraja Rasayana* and *Shrishadi* decoction and *Shujyadi Lepa* local application after *Virechana Karma* increased cure rate nearly 80 % in patients of *Vicharchika* significantly. Also, 91.7 % of no recurrence rate was reported. Treatment was given for 60 days and each *Dosha's* improved remarkably<sup>18</sup>. Vitiligo is a common, developed, discolouration of the skin, characterized by well-circumscribed, ivory, or chalky white macules which are flush to the skin surface<sup>19</sup>. In the treatment of vitiligo or leukoderma *shodhan* (*Virechan*) therapy is useful. According to

this article, the crable *kustha* do not recur if pathological factors are expelled out by *Shodhana*<sup>20</sup>. Acne Vulgaris is a chronic inflammatory condition of the pilosebaceous units, characterized by the formation of comedones, erythematic papules and pustules, less frequently nodules or cysts too<sup>21</sup>. *Virechana* is a method, which is much safer, less complicated in acne vulgaris or muchdushika<sup>22</sup>. *Virechana karma* does the cleansing the *Koshta* and brings down the vitiated *Dosha* from the body and helps to maintain the *Dosha* and *Dhatu Samya* or keep up the homeostasis and leads to the restoration and reconstruction of body tissues and also boost the body immunity and cleanses of the *Srotas* (microchannels). Therefore, *virechana* is a very important therapeutic measure for skin diseases<sup>23</sup>. *Virechana* drugs having the properties like *Ushna*, *tikshna*, *Sukshma*, *Vyavayi* and *Vikasi*<sup>24</sup> due to these properties' medicines reach the *Hrudaya* and circulate through the vessel. Due to the *Ushna* property present in medicine, they liquify the *doshas* located in the entire body, thus *doshas* move towards GIT, morbid *doshas* reaches the stomach carried by *Udana vayu*, due to the predominance of *prithvi* and *Jala Mahabhuta* in *virechana dravya*, it starts the downward movement of *doshas* from *Koshta* and leads to the expulsion of unwanted toxin from the body<sup>25</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

*Virechana* is a better treatment or therapy for curative aspects as well as preventive aspects in skin diseases. *Virechana* Therapy is recommended and is highly beneficial for the Detoxification in case of accumulation of *Pitta dosha* like skin disorders, blisters, abscess, liver disorders etc. as skin diseases occurs mainly because of *pitta dosha* or *rakta dosha* thus *Virechan* is useful in it. Among all types of *Shodhanakarma* *Virechana karma* is agra (superior). It is beneficial for improving blood circulation while nourishing the skin, improving digestion, strengthening muscles, and eliminating stress.

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**Source of Support: Nil**

**Conflict of Interest: None Declared**

How to cite this URL: Kanchan Thakur & Suneel Pal Singh: A Review On The Role Of Virechana In Various Skin Diseases. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2021 {cited November 2021} Available from: [http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/2835\\_2839.pdf](http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/2835_2839.pdf)